

2016

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*Washington
Department of*
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**



2015 bull harvested in the Lewis River GMU – Photo courtesy of Ben McLaren

DISTRICT 9 HUNTING PROSPECTS

Skamania, Clark, and Klickitat counties

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DISTRICT 9 GENERAL OVERVIEW

District 9 is located in the southwest/central part of Washington and is the only district in the state that includes significant amounts of both west and east-side habitats. Game management units (GMUs) in District 9 include 554 (Yale), 564 (Battle Ground), 568 (Washougal), 560 (Lewis River), 572 (Siouxon), 574 (Wind River), 578 (West Klickitat), 388 (Grayback), and 382 (East Klickitat). Hunters can choose a variety of habitats, including areas covered by west and east-side season dates and permit regulations.

The geography of District 9 is dominated by the Cascade Mountain Range, which divides the district into west and east-side zones. Topography varies from near sea level along the Columbia River and its lower tributaries to alpine habitats associated with Mount St. Helens and Mt. Adams in the Cascade Range.

Dominant west-side river drainages include the Lewis, Washougal, and Wind rivers. Major east-side watersheds include the White Salmon and Klickitat rivers. Rock Creek in eastern Klickitat County is the primary watershed in ponderosa pine/oak and shrub steppe portions of the district. The southern border of the district is bounded by the Columbia River.

District 9 is one of the most diverse habitat areas of the state and includes west-side coniferous forests dominated by Douglas fir and western hemlock. These forests give way to Oregon white oak and ponderosa pine as you travel to the east side of the Cascade Mountains. In eastern Klickitat County, pine and oak habitat transition into shrub steppe dominated by grassland and sagebrush.

The majority of the west-side forest land is dominated by the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and state land managed by the Department of Natural Resources. These are public lands open to public access. Weyerhaeuser owns a block of land in GMU 568 (Washougal) and scattered lands throughout GMU 578 (West Klickitat). Permits or leases are required for access to this land and information about recreation on Weyerhaeuser property can be found [here](#).

Eastside forest and shrub steppe/grassland habitat is primarily in private land ownership with limited public access. Industrial timber company lands are generally open to public hunting, but generally not open to private motorized vehicles. Access to these lands may be impacted during the months of August, September, and in some cases, October, due to high fire danger. Most timber companies maintain recreational access hotlines where hunters can find out if the land is closed to fire danger prior to hunting. You can find a list of recreational access websites and hotlines maintained by private industrial timber companies at the end of this document.

Hancock timberlands in GMU 578 (West Klickitat) are popular for hunting deer, elk, and turkey. More information about hunting on Hancock Klickitat timberlands can be found at the end of this document. Stevenson Land Company also owns scattered timberlands throughout GMU

578, and information about recreation on their land can be found [here](#). The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has a Feel Free to Hunt access agreement with Western Pacific Timber in GMU 388 (Grayback). This land is popular for deer hunting. More information about hunting on Western Pacific Land can be found at the end of this document. More information about hunting opportunities on private land can be found on [WDFW's Private Lands webpage](#) or the [GoHunt mapping](#) site. The GoHunt mapping program has useful layers like GMU and elk/deer area boundaries, roads, Wildlife Areas, and different basemaps (public land, aerial photos, topography).



Young hunter in the Yale GMU – Photo courtesy of Emily Lucas

ELK

Elk in District 9 are managed as part of the Mount St. Helens Herd. Information about the [St. Helens Elk Herd Plan](#) is available on the WDFW website. Also, see both the [Game Harvest Statistics](#) and [Game Status and Trend Reports](#) on the hunting page of the WDFW website for much more information on elk management in District 9.

Elk hunting within District 9 is managed under a variety of seasons, so check regulations closely before going afield. Two specific details of elk management include the fact that GMUs 388 (Grayback) and 382 (East Klickitat) require eastern Washington elk tags, while the remainder of

District 9 is within the western Washington elk tag area. Additionally, GMU 564 (Battle Ground) and 554 (Yale) are Firearm Restriction GMUs.

GMU 560 (Lewis River) offers the most opportunity for elk hunting in District 9. The majority of this area is public land within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Access during the modern firearm season and hunter success can be dependent upon early season snow levels. GMUs 574 (Wind River), 572 (Siouxon), and 578 (West Klickitat) are all good elk units. GMUs 574 and 572 are primarily public U.S. Forest Service lands, while GMU 578 is primarily private land, so make sure you have good maps for identifying ownership in this area.

GMUs 388 and 382 in Klickitat County have very few elk and are generally considered better for deer hunting. GMU 564 in Clark County only has elk in the extreme northern portion of the GMU. This area has a mix of public and private lands, and knowledge of ownership is important before planning your hunt in this area.

This fall's elk hunting has the potential to be impacted by drought conditions. Some areas may be closed to both motorized and non-motorized access. Even in familiar areas, extra scouting is recommended because elk distribution may have changed and normal hunting lands may be closed due to fire danger.

BACTERIAL HOOF DISEASE

Over the past decade, WDFW has received a growing number of reports of elk exhibiting hoof deformities in southwest Washington. This condition is characterized by abnormal hoof growth, cavitating sole ulcers and, in severe cases, eventual sloughing of the hoof capsule. Reports have been increasing in number and geographic scope, and hunters are regularly seeing – and sometimes harvesting – elk with this condition. It has been noted in both males and females, old and very young animals, and in any hoof.

In recent years, WDFW has worked collaboratively with five independent diagnostic laboratories and epidemiological specialists on a 16-member panel of researchers and veterinarians to identify the disease and find its cause. All evidence to date points to treponeme infectious bacteria, which appears to be very similar to a disease complex known as digital dermatitis (DD), the most prevalent infectious hoof disease of cattle, and, in some parts of the world, sheep and goats. Although many bacteria play a role in hoof disease, a type of spirochete belonging to the genus *Treponema* is the most common.

Treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD) in elk most closely resembles contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD) in sheep. There is no evidence that the bacteria are harmful to humans, and tests have shown that the disease does not affect animals' meat or organs.

If the meat looks and smells normal, and if common sense and good hygiene are practiced during the harvesting, processing, and cooking, the meat is most likely safe to eat. Please see the Department's website for more on [Wild Game Meat Food Safety](#).

The primary area of TAHD infection is in the Cowlitz River Basin. However, suspected incidences of hoof disease occur in southwest Washington in 10 counties and the disease affects both the Mount St. Helens and Willapa elk herds. Scientists believe environmental factors are important in disease initiation, and the bacteria likely persist in wet soils and spread to new locations on the hooves of infected animals.

For this reason, WDFW has implemented new regulations requiring hunters to leave the hooves of any elk taken in the affected area on site. See page 66 of the 2016 Big Game Hunting pamphlet for details on the regulations regarding leaving elk feet at the site of harvest in southwest Washington.

Hunters can also help WDFW address this challenging wildlife management issue by reporting elk with hoof disease on the [online reporting tool](#). Hunters who harvest an elk with a collar are asked to call the phone number on the collar as soon as possible so it can be retrieved. This information is important for an ongoing WDFW study on the effects of the disease on survival and reproduction.



Example of elk hooves deformed by TAHD

DEER



Photo courtesy of Meredith Butcher

Deer populations are generally stable in lower elevation units such as Washougal (568) and Battle Ground (564), as well as the Klickitat County GMUs West Klickitat (578) and Grayback (388). Deer hunting in East Klickitat (382) should be better than in recent years, as post-season buck numbers have improved over the past two years. Deer populations are generally low in the Cascade Mountain GMUs, including Lewis River (560), Wind River (574), and Siouxon (572).

Deer harvest and success is remarkably consistent within District 9, where hunters are expected to harvest approximately 2,500 bucks during the 2016 general season. That would represent a success rate of 15-20 percent. Historical information on deer harvest trends in District 9 is available on the WDFW website under [Game Harvest Statistics](#) and [Game Status and Trend Reports](#).

Successful hunting for black-tailed deer is primarily a function of the effort, focus, and energy that hunters put into the hunt. Black-tailed deer thrive in heavily vegetated habitats and are often very nocturnal in nature. This means that successful black-tail hunters must be in position early in the morning and carefully hunt near sources of food and in secure cover.

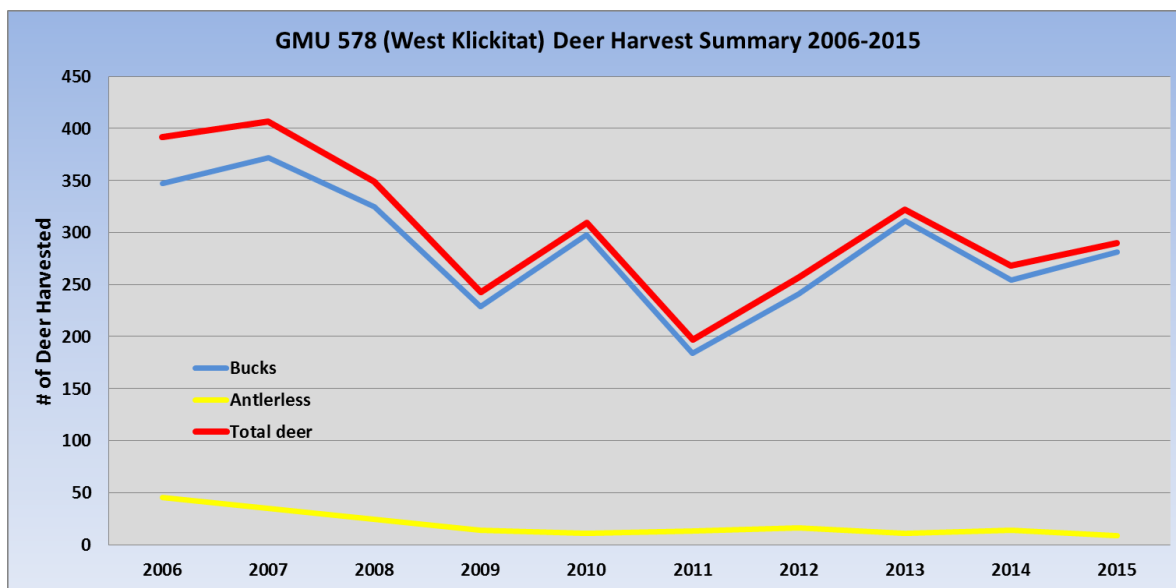
Bucks travel more during the rut when they cover large amounts of territory searching for does in estrus. This makes bucks more vulnerable, as they spend less time hiding and are sometimes found in open habitats like clear-cuts and meadows. Not surprisingly, approximately one-third of

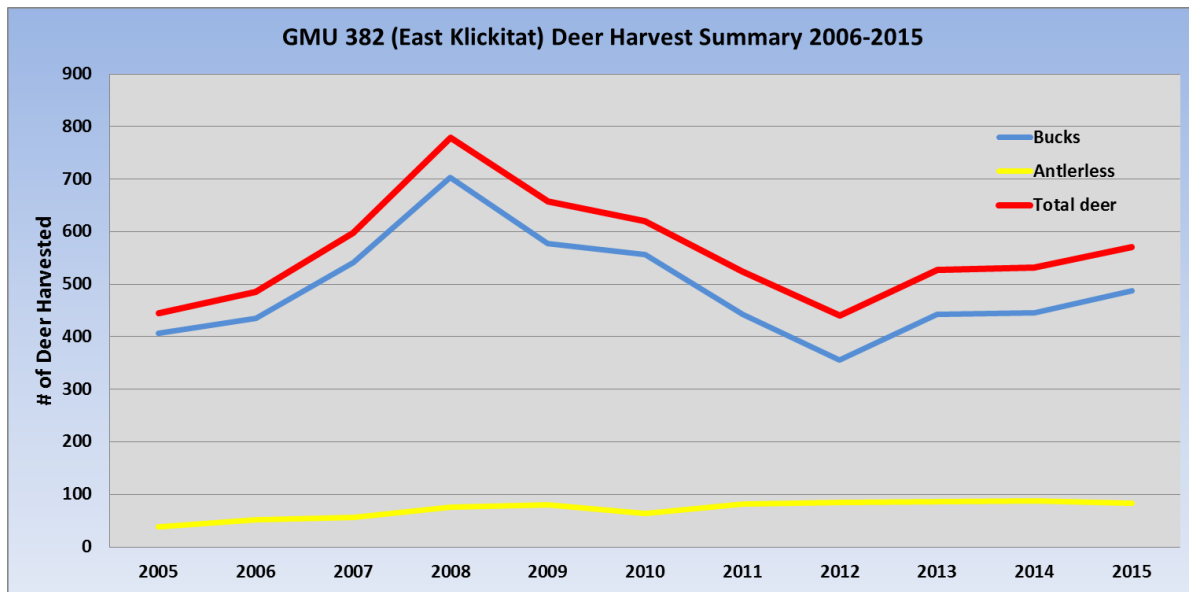
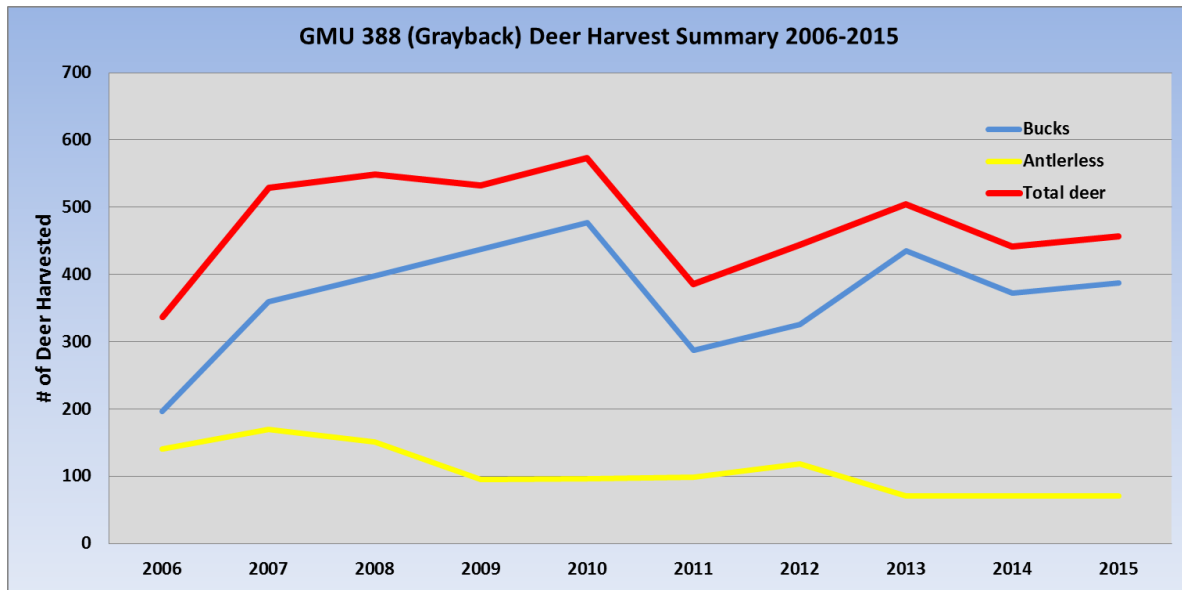
the annual buck harvest in Region 5 occurs during the four-day late buck hunt held each November.

Within District 9, GMUs 554 (Yale), 560 (Lewis River), 564 (Battle Ground), 568 (Washougal), and 572 (Siouxon) offer an attractive general season hunting opportunity. Hunters should note, however, the firearm restrictions in GMUs 554 and 564 (see page 90 of the 2016 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations).

Those interested in trophy-hunting opportunities for deer might consider any of the Klickitat County units. GMU 578 (West Klickitat), GMU 388 (Grayback), and GMU 382 (East Klickitat) are all managed under a 3-point or larger antler restriction. Collectively, the Klickitat GMUs support an annual harvest of over 1,000 3-point or larger bucks. Hunters are advised to carefully review the regulations before going afield, as the rules differ in each unit and none of the Klickitat GMUs allow general season late buck hunting.

This fall's deer hunting has the potential to be impacted by drought conditions. Some areas may be closed to both motorized and non-motorized access. It is recommended to do extra scouting even in familiar areas because deer distribution may have changed and normal hunting lands may be closed for fire danger.





BEAR



District 9 is split between two black bear hunt zones for the fall bear hunting season: the South Cascades (GMUs 574, 572, 568, 564, and 560), in which the season runs from August 15-November 15, and the East Cascades (GMUs 578, 388, and 382), which runs from August 1-November 15. In 2015, hunters harvested 99 bears in the South Cascades (2.7 percent success rate) and 233 in the East Cascades zone (5% success rate). These success ratios are below the statewide average (6.8%).

All successful bear hunters must submit the premolar tooth in a tooth envelope—see page 69 of the pamphlet for details.

COUGAR

Cougars are difficult to hunt and are typically harvested opportunistically by deer and elk hunters. The early cougar hunting season runs from September 1 to December 31. A season harvest guideline system was initiated in 2012, which closes hunt areas after January 1 if the harvest guidelines have been met or exceeded. For more information on these new guidelines and to check if the area you are interested in hunting is closed or not, see the [cougar webpage](#). All cougar pelts must be sealed by WDFW within five days of harvest. Contact a WDFW office to make an appointment to have a cougar pelt sealed.

WATERFOWL

Goose Hunting: Hunters in Goose Management Area 2 are reminded of the complex goose hunting regulations designed to protect wintering populations of the dusky Canada goose. New hunters and those whose hunting authorization was invalidated for Area 2 during the previous year need to pass an exam with a minimum of 80 percent to receive authorization for the current year.

Very little goose hunting is available in Skamania County. Goose hunting in Klickitat County is limited and primarily associated with private lands. Permission is always necessary for access to these sites. Dusky Canada geese are not generally found in Skamania or Klickitat counties and fall under more liberal goose hunting regulations. Check the [waterfowl pamphlet](#) for more information on season length and bag limits.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO AREA 2 GOOSE HUNTING FROM LAST YEAR

Goose hunting in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties is subject to the additional restrictions of Goose Management Area 2, which are in place to protect the dusky subspecies of the Canada goose. Goose hunters are encouraged to review the different subspecies of Canada geese in southwest Washington and are reminded that the ability to identify the different subspecies is the key to productive and enjoyable goose hunting.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission has approved the following changes for the 2016-17 southwest Washington goose season in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the states of Oregon and Alaska:

- The season for dusky Canada geese is **closed** and hunters will be cited for taking a dusky Canada goose.
- Southwest goose season hunting hours extended to 30 minutes after the start of official hunting hours to 30 minutes before the end of official hunting hours (same as other goose hunting areas of the state).
- Hunters are no longer required to record harvest or bring birds to check stations.
- Area 2A/2B boundaries have been combined and are now known as Area 2. Area 2 includes all of Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, Pacific and Grays Harbor counties.
- General season ending dates are extended to March (late season discontinued). All hunters can now participate in the February-March season, but no hunting is allowed on National Wildlife Refuges or WDFW Wildlife Areas.

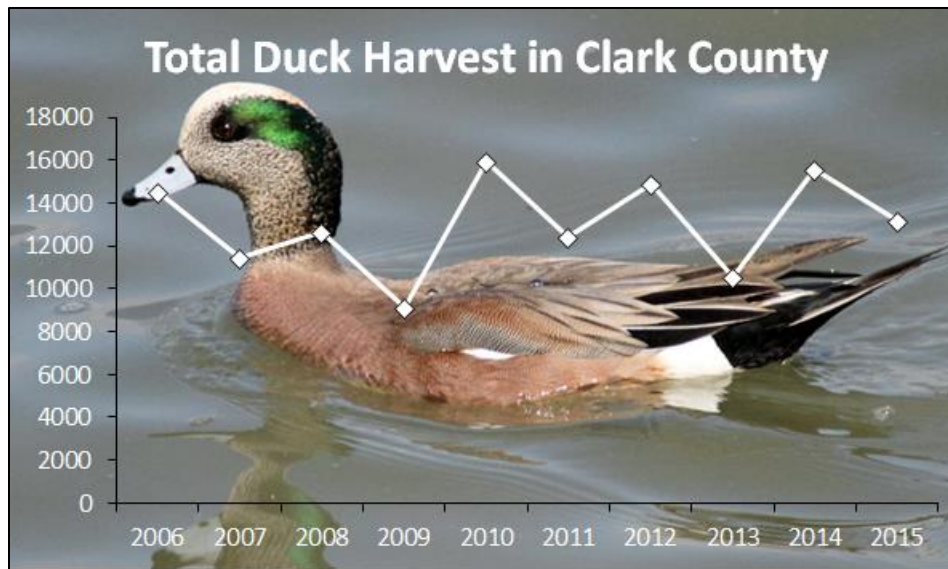
Hunters are advised to review the revised goose identification [training program](#) prior to hunting this season and check the 2016-17 WDFW Migratory Waterfowl & Upland Game Seasons

pamphlet for more information. Wildlife managers are relying on southwest goose hunters to make this new season format successful, so goose hunting will remain open in permit zones.

Most public goose hunting in Clark County is located in the Vancouver lowlands and Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. Hunter access to Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge is by reservation.



Duck Hunting: Duck hunting this fall should be good based on breeding season reports from British Columbia and Alaska. The Commission has approved a liberal season of 107 days (two-day youth hunt, 105 day general hunt) and a daily bag limit of seven ducks. Like Canada goose hunting, most public access for duck hunting in Clark County is limited to the Vancouver lowlands and Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge.



The following sources provide excellent information on North American waterfowl populations:

<http://flyways.us/>

<http://flyways.us/duck-identification-resources>

<https://www.fws.gov/birds/surveys-and-data/reports-and-publications/population-status.php>

<http://www.flyways.us/status-of-waterfowl/pilot-reports>

DOVE

Dove hunting in 2015 was primarily associated with Clark and Klickitat counties. For Clark County, there was an increase in dove harvest in 2015, due primarily to a substantial rise in hunter effort. Dove hunting opportunity exists on WDFW lands in the Vancouver lowlands, including Shillapoo Wildlife Area. Klickitat County dove hunting success declined the last two years and most hunting opportunity was limited to private hunt clubs in the eastern part of the county. Opportunity is limited, as little quality public land exists for dove hunting in Klickitat County unless one has access to private lands. Fall hunting should continue to be marginal in Klickitat County during the upcoming 2016 hunting season.

FOREST GROUSE



©TOM KOGUT

Grouse numbers should be average in select forested areas for the 2016 hunting season. The winter of 2015 was back to more normal conditions, with average snowpack in the South Cascades. Grouse harvest throughout District 9 in 2015 increased in all areas, primarily due to increased hunter participation and favorable hunting conditions. Skamania County, which is predominately public ownership, provides hunters with the most opportunity in the district. In District 9, the predominance of quality grouse habitat is located on USFS lands in Skamania County and selected areas of the Simcoe Mountains west of Highway 97 in Klickitat County.

Most grouse harvest in District 9 is associated with general deer and elk hunting seasons, as birds are hunted opportunistically. Prospective hunters should focus hunting efforts on brushy riparian zones or overgrown abandoned logging roads for the best chance at success, especially for ruffed grouse. Hunters interested in forest grouse will improve their chances by scouting areas prior to their hunt.



Young hunter in Skamania County – Photo courtesy of Pete Nelson

PHEASANT



District 9 has very little wild production of pheasants, especially compared to other areas of eastern Washington. In the western Washington portion of the district in Clark County, most pheasant hunting is associated with the Vancouver Lake and Shillapoo release areas. Essentially all hunting opportunities are associated with pen-raised birds and the formalized release sites in

Klickitat County (Eastern Washington Pheasant Release Sites) and Clark County (Western Washington Pheasant Release Sites). Additional information about these sites, as well as others in the state of Washington, can be found [online](#).

Details about each of the pheasant hunting sites are listed below.

Clark County Pheasant Release Sites

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

The Vancouver Lake and Shillapoo release sites are on WDFW owned land and comprise approximately 1,450 acres. To reach both the Vancouver Lake and Shillapoo release sites, take the Fourth Plain Blvd. exit (exit #1D) off I-5. Go west on Fourth Plain Blvd. For the Vancouver Lake release site, head north on Fruit Valley Road, then west on La Frombois Road to the site. For the Shillapoo Release site, stay on Lower River Road to the site. Keep in mind that these areas are extremely popular on Saturdays, with typically more than 100 vehicles using the Shillapoo release sites.

Woodland Bottoms

This 270 acre site is partially owned by DNR and partially privately owned. To find the Woodland Bottoms release site, take the Woodland exit (exit 21) off I-5. Head west on Goerig Road and Davidson Avenue. Go around Horseshoe Lake on South Pekin Road to Whalen Road. Travel west on Whalen Road, then south on Kuhns Road to the release site.

Klickitat County Pheasant Release Sites

Approximately 400 pheasants are released at three sites in Klickitat County each year. One is located on Department-owned land, and the others are on land owned by a private individual. Please treat the properties respectfully so future visitors may enjoy these sites as well. All sites are for day-use only, and no overnight camping is allowed. These sites are relatively undeveloped, with primitive road access. Roads may become slippery when wet, and soil will become extremely soft with fall rains and snow. Be cautious in selecting parking places next to roads in order to avoid becoming stuck. Driving off-road across fields is never allowed, regardless of season.

Goldendale Hatchery Pheasant Release Site

This 240-acre site is owned by WDFW. It is bounded by Hill Road on the west side and Fish Hatchery Road on the north side.

From Goldendale, drive west on Highway 142 approximately four miles to the intersection with Hill Road. Drive about one half mile north on Hill Road, across the bridge over Spring Creek, then turn east on a dirt road onto WDFW property. This road goes into the center of the property.

Note: The hatchery facilities are located along the east boundary of the parcel. Please stay away from the immediate vicinity of the buildings to protect worker safety.

Gun Club Property

This 480-acre site is privately owned. It is bounded by Rogers Road on the north and Fenton Lane to the east.

From the intersection with Broadway Street in Goldendale, drive east on the Bickleton Highway 5.6 miles to the intersection with Purvine Road. Turn right (south) on Purvine Road and drive 0.9 miles to the T intersection with Rogers Road. Go either left or right on Rogers Road and look for wire gates accessing the property. There are two gates. Both are marked with signs exhibiting the WDFW logo. Park along Rogers Road, outside the fence, and walk in. Purvine Road may be impassible when wet. For an alternative access, go east another mile on the Bickleton Highway, and turn right (south) on Fenton Lane. Follow Fenton Lane south one mile to its intersection with Rogers Road. Turn right (west) onto Rogers Road, and drive about 0.1 mile west to a gate and parking area.

Finn Ridge Road Property

This 160-acre site is privately owned. It is bounded by the Finn Ridge Road along the south property line and Ahola Road to the west.

From Centerville, drive two miles west on the Centerville Highway to a 90-degree bend in the highway to the south. Turn right (north) on Erickson Road. Drive one mile to the intersection with the Finn Ridge Road. Turn left (west) onto Finn Ridge Road and follow it about 1.5 miles to the first sign marking the corner of the site, on the right. It is marked with green Feel Free to Hunt signs.

QUAIL, GRAY PARTRIDGE, AND CHUKAR



2016 spring conditions have been more favorable than last year, as more normal precipitation levels returned to District 9. Expect upland bird hunting in GMUs 388 and 382 to be improved for 2016, but still below historic averages for this area of the state. Most access for upland bird hunting is restricted to private lands and hunt clubs in eastern Klickitat County. Hunters interested in hunting this area should seek access permission in advance of the season. Most hunt clubs have waiting lists for new members, so access is difficult without membership for those lands.

TURKEY



Wild turkey populations in Klickitat County continue to be healthy and hunting conditions for the fall of 2016 should be typical for this area. Turkey harvest in 2015 was typical of the season averages for harvest in Klickitat County, with a 25 percent hunter success rate. This is typically

lower than the statewide success rate for turkey harvest. Hunter numbers and harvest rate has continued at similar levels over the past few years. Hunters interested in fall hunting in Klickitat County are reminded that this is a special permit season and hunters must apply to be drawn for this hunt. Fall hunt dates are Sept. 17 to Oct. 14, 2016.

The majority of quality hunting areas in Klickitat County are below 1,500 feet. Popular hunting areas are generally associated with the Big White Salmon and Klickitat River drainages. East of the Klickitat River, small turkey populations are found in the Simcoe Mountains north and west of the town of Goldendale. Numerous landowners have issues with turkey damage on private property in the lower Klickitat River drainage, from the town of Klickitat south. WDFW periodically receives reports from landowners in the White Salmon area that are having issues with turkeys on their lands. Private landowners may be willing to provide access to turkey hunters that ask for permission and practice good hunter ethics.

Outside of Klickitat County, there is little opportunity for turkey hunting within the district. In Skamania County, turkey populations are located primarily to the east between the Wind River and Underwood. Most turkeys are found below 1,000 feet in elevation. In most cases, hunters interested in this area will need to contact private landowners. Clark County offers little to no turkey hunting opportunity.



Turkeys in the Klickitat River drainage

PUBLIC LAND RESOURCES

DNR-Pacific Cascades Office (SW WA)

601 Bond Road

PO Box 280

Castle Rock, WA 98611-0280

Phone: 360-577-2025

pacific-cascade.region@dnr.wa.gov

DNR-Southeast Region Office (Klickitat County)

713 Bowers Road
Ellensburg, WA 98926-9301
Phone: 509-925-8510
southeast.region@dnr.wa.gov

Link to purchase DNR quad maps:

http://www.dnr.wa.gov/BusinessPermits/Topics/Maps/Pages/public_land_quadangle_maps.aspx

Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Link to purchase ranger district maps:

http://www.nationalforeststore.com/merchant.mvc?Screen=CTGY&Store_Code=NFS&Category_Code=R6WA

PRIVATE INDUSTRIAL FORESTLANDS

Hancock Forest Management (HFM)

HFM Klickitat Timberlands

- Generally open to walk-in access with motorized access through property via county roads
- Access hotline (509) 364-3331

SDS (Stevenson Land Company or Broughton)

- Generally open to walk-in access. More information at <http://stevensonlandcompany.com/recreation-opportunities/>

Weyerhaeuser

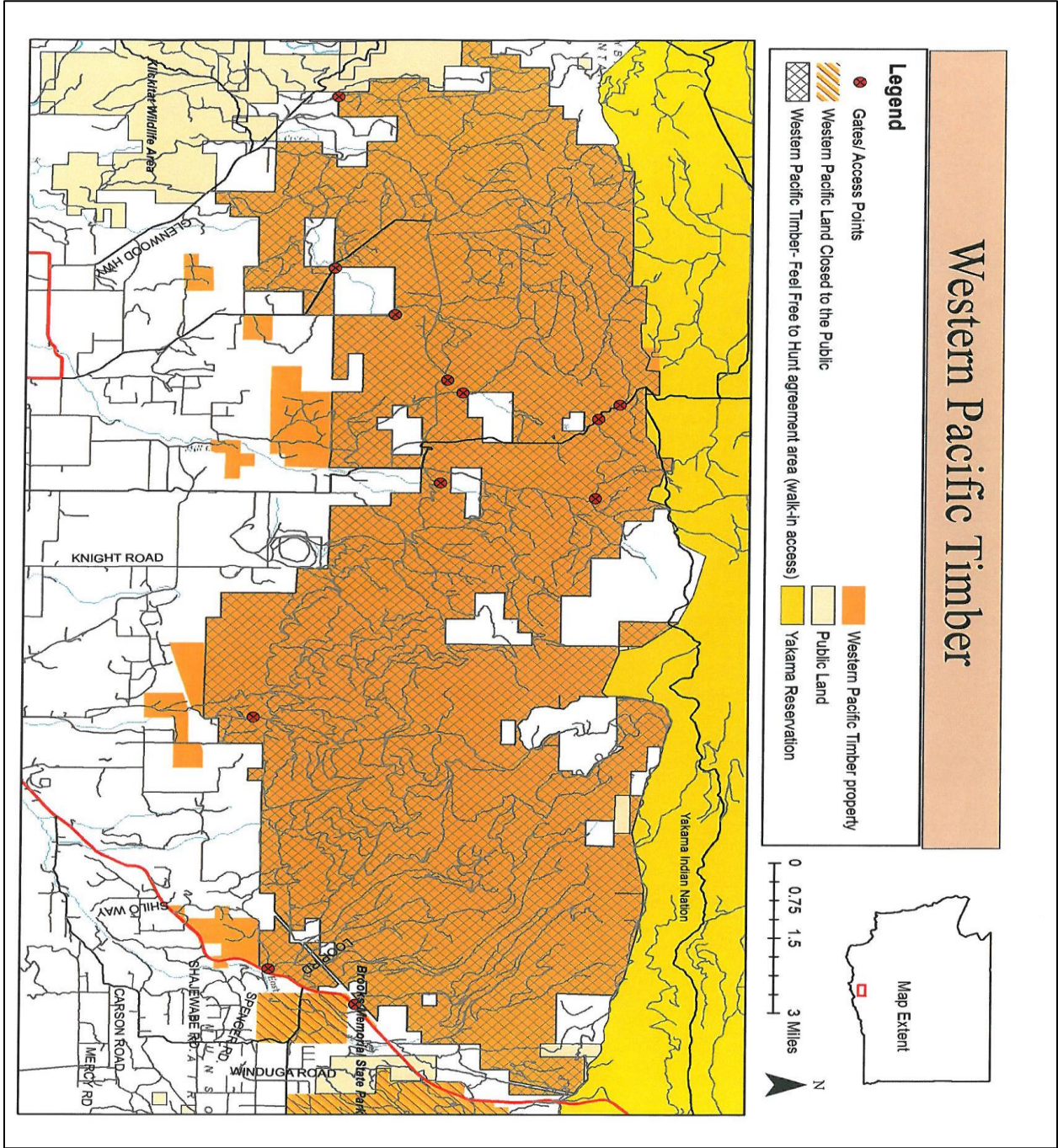
- Recreational access hotline-866-636-6531, recreation webpage at <http://www.weyerhaeuser.com/Businesses/RecreationalAccess/Washington>
- Access varies by tree farm
 - St. Helens Tree Farm
 - Access is by permit only and permits can be purchased on the website above. Please see website for details, including maps.
 - Yacolt (Columbia River East) – Washougal GMU 568
 - Access is by permit only and permits can be purchased on the website above. Please see website for details, including maps.

- Skamania/Klickitat Counties
 - Access is by Recreational Lease only. Please see website for details, including maps.

Western Pacific Timber

- The majority of these lands are enrolled in WDFW's Feel Free to Hunt Program. The lands are open to walk in access only, with the exception of county roads that run through the property and remain open for motorized access.
- More information can be located at http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/hunting_access/private_lands/hunt/128/
- Western Pacific lands east of Highway 97 are closed to public access.
- Contact the WPT Boise office (208) 343-6074 for closure updates.







Western Pacific Timber



Welcome to Western Pacific Timberlands

Western Pacific Timber maintains over 65,000 acres of private land open to the public in cooperation with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Help us maintain access to these lands by being a respectful and courteous visitor. Treat them as you would your own property.

- Obey road closures. No vehicles are permitted behind closed gates. Do not block or obstruct gates.***
- No firewood cutting is permitted without a written permit from Western Pacific Timber.***
- No campfires or other open fires are permitted.***
- No littering or dumping***
- If you camp, leave no trace, clean your campsite.***
- Do not drive nails into trees or shoot at trees***
- Drive roads with caution – watch for log trucks and other traffic.***
- Western Pacific lands East of US 97 are Closed to public entry.***

Help us by reporting vandalism or other violations. The misdeeds of a few may mean loss of access for everyone! For non-emergency poaching/violations call 1-877-933-9847

For other questions and concerns, please call Tara Meyer, WDFW, (360) 906-6721

Enjoy your visit to Western Pacific Timberlands